

Patrika

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles

SEPTEMBER 2015

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Upcoming Events

Geeta Jnana Yagna: Chapter XIII by Swamini Ganganandaji	Oct 8-14	7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Discourse on Amritabindu Upanishad by Swamini Ganganandaji	Oct 9-14	6:30 am - 7:30 am
Just for Seniors - For ages 55+	Oct 15	9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Kalanjali: Fire & Ash	Oct 17	7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Navratri Celebration with Garba & Raas	Oct 17	7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Sevanjali 2015: Shruti Layam <i>Semi-classical music by Padma Bhushan K. J. Yesudas</i> Buy Tickets Online	Nov 1	4 pm
Valmiki Ramayana Discourse Series by Swami Ishwarananda	Nov 2-6	6:30 am - 7:30 am 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Diwali & Annakoot Celebrations	Nov 14	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Bhagavad Gita Discourse Series by Swami Ishwarananda	Every Sunday	9:00 am - 10:15 am 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm
Bhaja Govindam Discourse Series by Acharya Mahadevan	Every Sunday	9:00 am - 10:15 am 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm
Guided Vedic Chanting by Swami Ishwarananda	Every Saturday	6:30 am - 7:30 am
World Leadership Dialogue Chinmaya Vibhooti, Pune, India	Dec 10-13	

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Thus Spake The Master

A man of integrity is accepted, believed, trusted and befriended by all.

- Swami Chinmayananda

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Words Of The Wise

When a person works with inspiration, he never gets tired or exhausted.

- Swami Tejomayananda

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THINK!

He who follows is the leader.

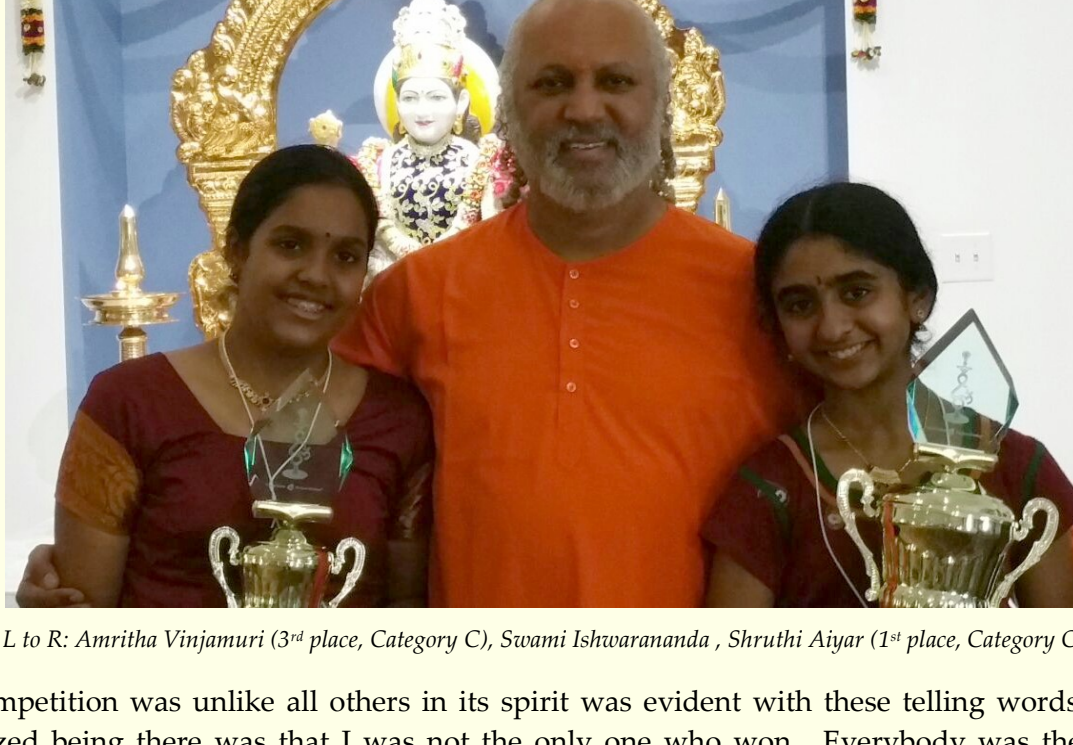
- Swami Ishwarananda

for e-Satsang blog, click [here](#)

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CMLA Children Are Outstanding At National Gita Chanting Contest

On Sept.6, CMLA was abuzz with the splendid news from Chicago: its Balavihar children had won the first and third spots in the national Gita chanting competition! A beaming **Shruti Aiyar** and **Amritha Vinjamuri** gracefully acknowledged the accolades they received on their return to Rameshwaram. CMLA was also proud to have as its representatives at the contest—**Mohana Sai, Medha Rao, Advika Iyer, Pranati Kuppa and Eshwar Kuppa**.



L to R: Amritha Vinjamuri (3rd place, Category C), Swami Ishwarananda, Shruthi Aiyar (1st place, Category C)

That this competition was unlike all others in its spirit was evident with these telling words of Shruti, “One thing I realized being there was that I was not the only one who won. Everybody was the best from their respective centers. It made me appreciate the hard work of others.” Asserted her mother Shobha, “I used to tell Shruthi she should enjoy participating in the competition and not think about winning a prize. Even though she won the national competition with God’s grace, I have always felt that everyone who participated is a winner.”

Amritha, a regular chanter since second grade and winner of other chanting competitions at Rameshwaram echoed the same sentiments, “We all chanted because we wanted to chant, not for any prize,” she said. She shared candidly that when she had started to chant as a young child, she would get discouraged when she didn’t win the top prizes; but over years chanting turned out to be the reward in itself.

The aim of Chinmaya Mission is to nurture young minds with the age old wisdom and teachings of the Gita. Many an adult has attested to the fact that the competition which has children memorize the verses when they are young, leads to a greater understanding of the text, as they grow older. What better way then, to learn the scriptures?

Amritha’s mother Manjusha says, she believes chanting not only strengthens the bond with God but benefits the individual personally, since it is an effective brain exercise, improves speech, pronunciation, articulation, memory and focus. Amritha seconded her mother’s statement and said chanting has increased her concentration at school and she now looks forward to reading the Gita on her own whenever she has time from homework.

For Shruthi, who began to participate in chanting contests just last year, she said that what she likes most, “is that it inspires you and is a fun way to learn the Gita. Although I did not understand much of the Sanskrit that I was chanting, I learnt a lot of values such as discipline and being alert, thanks to the strict rules of the competition.”

CMLA conducts the Gita chanting competition every year and the earnestness with which it is conducted can be judged from the one enduring visual every Sunday at Rameshwaram: a group of children sitting in the temple premises learning and perfecting their chanting skills under the guidance of CMLA’s **Janakiram**. “It is an extremely satisfying and enriching experience,” he says. “It is a very good feeling to see kids chant loudly, clearly, with correct pronunciation and bhavam. To see kids, especially very young ones, about 5 years of age come to the class regularly and get immersed in the chanting experience - it is very gratifying.”

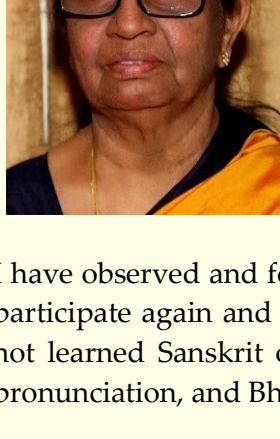
Janakiram, who is often seen leading the pujas at Rameshwaram, was a judge at this year’s national competition. “My judging experience in Chicago was once in a lifetime opportunity. To listen to kids from all over the US chant with phenomenal poise, bhakti and correct pronunciation, made judging so much more difficult. The main lesson I always carry from what Swamiji and Mahadevanji say, is, to do the action without any expectation of a specific result. This is what I reiterate to the kids as well during the class. Just do the best we can, leave the rest to God and accept whatever is the end result as his prasadam.”

With that in mind, CMLA offers congratulations to each and every participant who has spent time and made the effort to memorize and learn from the greatest of Hinduism’s holy texts.

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Geeta Chanting - An Offering To Pujya Gurudev

- by Viji Mahadev



Pujya Gurudev is the Geetacharya of modern times who brought this Eternal message to Arjuna like us. In order to bring this philosophy into the life of children, the Bhagavad Gita Chanting competition was created by Gurudev, to motivate children to learn to chant the Gita and ultimately bring this philosophy into their lives

Chanting is found from my own personal experience to help improve the memory and focus. When one chants these shlokas with the right Bhaava it touches the heart and “waters the very root of a person’s existence. The chanting not only helps the child but also others who listen to the message of Sri Krishna through a child. Many of the judges, myself included have experienced this feeling.

I have observed and found that once children develop a love for chanting, the taste lingers on and they want to participate again and again. The Geeta “essentially gets into you.” It is amazing to see that children who have not learned Sanskrit or even the Bhagavad Geeta are able to memorize, and learn to chant with the correct pronunciation, and Bhaava.

The seven kids who went to Chicago for the Nationals, had to even endure a last minute change in the methodology of the judging criteria and had to “think on their feet”. It was interesting to watch the “mock sessions” where they showed great adaptability to the new format and also how they learnt from their mistakes. The parents of these kids also got really involved and helped their kids by additional practices at home. Even though we were worried about it, they did extremely well, and came out like champions. Two of the children won the National competition in Chicago and one child will be participating in the International competition in India. The parents as well as the children said this competition was a memorable experience.

I would say that the children have truly “*Chanted Geeta and Enchanted Krishna*”.

Overall the Geeta chanting contest conducted over the last 15 years has been a wonderful experience for the children, the parents, judges and volunteers. On my own part I look forward to doing this Seva year after year, watching more children & parents make the Geeta a part of their lives. Gurudev spread the message of Geeta for forty years and am grateful for the opportunity Swami Ishwaranandaji has given me to spread the Geeta through the Geeta chanting competition.

It has indeed been a Total Seva done in a spirit of Yagna, and hence true to its name --“*Geeta Chanting Yagna*”--a true offering to Pujya Gurudev from all His devotees.

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Special Training Session Held For New Teachers

A special session for new balavihar teachers was organized by the Education Council on Sept.12 at Rameshwaram. The aim was to acquaint them more deeply with the specifics of engaging with students, so the vision of providing an education to create outstanding citizens through the understanding of the ageless wisdom of Vedanta can be imparted effectively.

Accordingly, Swami Ishwarananda spoke to the newly inducted teachers about Chinmaya Mission and how it seeks to shape the future generation. Acharya Mahadevanji explained the very purpose of balavihar while other more experienced teachers from the different centers of CMLA talked, among other things, about how a class could be structured, the mechanics of telling a story without losing student attention and the importance of chanting.

Teachers were encouraged, at the conclusion of the session to ask questions. EC members at hand, also emphasized that teachers could reach out to them for help.

The teachers training session wound down with everyone exchanging notes and familiarizing themselves with each other, over lunch.



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Acharya’s Talk Provides Insight To “Excellence in Action”

Acharya Mahadevanji delivered an inspirational talk on the topic of “Excellence in action” at the Ashta Lakshmi temple in North Hollywood on Sept.12, to a captive audience. He started the discourse with a bhajan on Lord Narayana. Throughout the talk, he recited shlokas from the Bhagavad Gita, Upadesa Saram and other texts to illustrate the points he was making.

Mahadevanji in his talk, emphasized the need to act in a conscious way by developing equanimity.

He summarized with a Nine Point Plan for attaining perfection in action: Count your blessings every day and thank God for what you have; offer every action (good or bad) to the Lord as naivedyam; accept fruits of action as God’s prasadam to you; perform all action dedicated to the Lord; forget the past, do not be anxious about the future and be in the present; perform every action consciously and with dedication; make all work playful, imagine it to be a game; seek to serve others and stay focused on your customers and have an enthusiastic attitude.

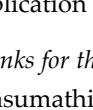
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Redlands BV Children Learn About Lord Ganesha

Young ones at Redlands balavihar learned about the symbolism of Lord Ganesha and chanted and sang in His glory on Ganesh Chaturthi. They also keenly observed the Ganesh puja that was performed for their benefit.



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